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ABSTRACT

Public libraries serve patrons who have a wide range of demographic characteristics. Boards of Trustees of public libraries play an important role in maintaining and planning libraries that serve the needs of the community. The demographic characteristics of the board are one factor that can help represent the diversity of the patron community. Library literature and past research suggest that public library boards should have members with a broad spectrum of demographic characteristics. Two studies, done in 1970 and 1998, provide comparative demographic information about public library trustees. This preliminary study of Ohio public libraries gathered and analyzed demographic information about trustees and public library communities. Gender, race, age, income and education data were generated through surveys distributed to public library board members. Trustees were chosen from Ohio public libraries that were ranked by size and stratified by the number of full-time employees (FTE). Data analysis compared demographic data of trustees and public library communities, and analyzed Category I (libraries with over 100 FTE), Category II (libraries with 20-100 FTE), and total survey results. Good representation on Ohio boards was noted in the areas of gender and race. Age, income, and education data revealed patterns of over- and under-representation. A copy of the questionnaire is appended. (Contains 18 references.) (Author/MES)

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ED 435 393

A DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY OF OHIO PUBLIC LIBRARY TRUSTEES

by Audrey A. Warner, M.S.W.

February 1999

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Public libraries serve patrons who have a wide range of demographic characteristics. Board of Trustees of public libraries play an important role in maintaining, and planning libraries which serve the needs of the community. The demographic characteristics of the board are one factor which can help represent the diversity of the patron community.

Library literature and past research suggest public library boards should have members with a broad spectrum of demographic characteristics. The 1970 study done by Ann E. Prentice, and a national study completed in 1998 by Mary Jo Lynch provide comparative demographic information about public library trustees.

This preliminary study of Ohio public libraries gathered and analyzed demographic information about trustees and public library communities. Gender, race, age, income and education data was generated through surveys distributed to public library board members. Trustees were chosen from Ohio public libraries that are ranked by size and stratified. Category I is libraries with over 100 FTE staff size, Category II is between 20 to 100 FTE staff, Category III is between 10 to 19.9 FTE staff and Category IV is less than 10 FTE staff. Data analysis compares demographic data of trustees and public library communities, as well as analyzing Category I, II and the total survey results. Good representation on Ohio boards was noted in the areas of gender and race. Age, income and education data revealed patterns of over and under-representation. Further research is indicated.

Table of Contents

	Page Number
Introduction	1
Purpose of the Study	2
Limitations of the Study	3
Literature Review	4
Methodology	11
Survey Analysis	13
Table 1 Data Analysis of Gender	13
Table 2 Data Analysis of Race	14
Table 3 Data Analysis of Age	15
Table 4 Data Analysis of Income	16
Table 5 Data Analysis of Education	17
Table 6 Data Analysis of Cat. I, II & Ohio Libraries	19
Conclusions and Implications	24
Ohio Public Library Trustee Questionnaire	Appendix A
Letter to Public Library Trustees	Appendix A
Letter to Public Library Directors	Appendix B

Introduction

The American public library is an important democratic institution. It is open and available to anyone regardless of origin, age or background. The responsibility of the public library to serve adequately its community lies in part on the Board of Trustees. Manley states that "the future of the public library...is dependent not upon librarians but upon library trustees" (Manley 1998, 108).

Library trustees are immensely important to public libraries. They are responsible for both maintaining and making future plans for them. Some of the specific responsibilities they fulfill are determining the purpose of the library, determining the needs of the community relative to the library, securing adequate finances for the library, planning and participating in public relations, being aware of local and state laws and supporting library legislation on state and national levels (Swan, 1992).

Virginia Young writes that one of the duties of the library board is to:

> know the program and needs of the library in relation to the community...[it is] the trustee's obligation not only to know the library but to interpret the library to the community. This liaison role, as interpreter between library and community, is an important part of the public trust assumed by service on a library board (Young 1995, 12).

Indeed the very term trustee is based upon the trust the public places on him or her. Harris writes, "the library board member's trust means nothing more than this: He is--or rather, he should be--a liaison officer as between, not only his institution and the municipal or county government, but also and mainly as between his institution and the general community" (Harris 1992, 52).

Adequately serving communities is accomplished in a variety of ways. Board members gather information about the library community they serve in both formal and informal ways. One formal process is research. Research in turn is used for library planning. Research includes various techniques to assess what services and materials patrons are currently using, and if non-user groups or current-user groups need additional materials, programs or services. Informal research done by trustees can include keeping informed about priorities, issues, and changes in the community; being a member of other local organizations, and taking part in various aspects of the community life. "The essential component to providing the service your users need is knowing your community... who is out there, including what they do and how they live". (Cohen 1995, 50-51)

When the library board begins with a group of trustees that represent a broad spectrum of the community via various demographic elements, "the resulting broad diversity of viewpoints will be not only democratic but conducive to a healthy and vital relationship between library and community." (Young 1995,16)

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to look to gather and analyze demographic information about public library boards in Ohio. The study will examine two key variables: (1) diversity in the characteristics of board members and (2) the match between the characteristics of board members compared to the communities they serve.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to public libraries in the state of Ohio, and is limited to a selection of board of trustees and their respective communities. It is not a true random sample of all public libraries. As such, the information is not generalizable to all public libraries.

A second limitation is the number of variables being surveyed which measure diversity and representation in library boards and communities. This study does look at gender, race, age, income, and education level. It does not look at all variables which measure diversity. An example of another relevant variable not measured is religion. While this study does examine six important variables measuring diversity, there are other variables which may be important.

Literature Review

Virginia Young in her book The Library Trustee , Chapter 3 Qualifications and Appointment of Trustees writes:

> whether by accident of by design, library boards were invariably drawn from groups of similar background and experience. Today's library has a new and increasing importance to the total community, and a well-balanced board should represent a cross section of the community... The needs and desires of every segment of society,...should be represented in the library program. It is important for trustees to reach their own group in the community; collect their views, and speak to and for them. (p.15-16)

The trustee has both an obligation to make sure the public library adequately meets the need of its community, and to provide the community with information about what the public library has available to meet their needs. According to Christenson (Summer 1995, 66) a "broad spectrum of community interests, geographic areas, jobs, and ethnic backgrounds should be represented on the board".

There is a limited amount of research examining the character of library boards. In 1935 the first national research on public library trustees and their demographic characteristics was published by Carlton Joeckel in Government of the American Public Library. His extensive study gathered data and examined public libraries controlled by boards and those without boards. For the libraries with boards, 667 board members in 91 cities with populations over 30,000 in 25 states distributed throughout the United States were studied. The demographic data examined included gender, age, education, occupations, income, length of service, religious affiliations, and political affiliations.

In the area of gender, board members were predominantly men. Seventy-eight percent of all board members were men. Twenty-one of the

91 boards had no women members and only 3 boards had a majority of women. The median age for board membership was 56, with the following distribution: 0.5% between 20-29, 6.7% between 30-39, 22.7% between 40-49, 33.4% between 50-59, 25.4% between 60-69, 9.6% between 70-79, 1.7% between 80-89. Joeckel states "The need for greater representation of younger people is obvious." (p.237)

Looking at education, Joeckel wrote "In a large number of cities there is an effective tradition that library-board members must be well educated". (p.238) Out of 598 board members 70% had received education in college, university or a professional school. As compared with boards of education in cities the same size, the percentage was 53% for these higher education categories. Joeckel further states, " there may be some question as to whether sufficient representation is given to the great mass of library users who are below the college level in education." (p.239) Since there is such a high level of education in board members, it follows that occupation shows a high representation in the professions. 43% of all board members were in the professional category. This category included lawyers, doctors, clergy, professors, teachers, journalists and miscellaneous others. Lawyers were the largest single group with 112 members equaling 17.6%; next were professors and teachers comprising 10% of the occupations. The second highest category was his miscellaneous category which included those in government service, mechanics, foremen, etc.; married women (not employed), retired or no occupation and special was 26% of the total. Married women made up a significant number in that category with 14%. Business was 15%, manufacturing 9% and financial 7%.

Though no specific figures were available for income, Jeockel wrote that information about economic standing of trustees is essential. He stated that specific "classification..is difficult because the terms used are relative". Specifically he notes the amount of income in a smaller city would not be equal to the same income in a larger city. His solution was to divide board members into one of three groups. Those with the greatest financial resources or "People of means" would account for "about 40%", about 55% for trustees of "modest financial standing" and those with limited resources "perhaps 5%". In summary, " library trustees have been reasonably successful financially".(p.240-241)

Last, no data on race was given. Brief information about nationality is mentioned though most board members described themselves as "American". A small number of members noted other ethnic backgrounds, namely German, Irish, English, Jewish, Scandinavian and Czech.

In 1970 Ann Prentice reviewed studies of public library trustees and completed her own study, The Public Library Trustee. Many of Prentice's conclusions were similar to those of Joeckel's 1935 research. According to Prentice the 1966 Municipal Yearbook classifies 95% of all public libraries as governed by boards of trustees. Prentice's research included public library boards in cities or regions with populations between 60,000 to 150,000, citing those under 60,000 to have a limited tax base and those over 150,000 to have complexity and problems particular to their size. She defines city population's between 60,000 to 150,000 as medium sized libraries. Thirty-one out of thirty-six libraries participated in the study from five states, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania.

In looking at gender, Prentice's 1970 study found predominantly men on boards with 66.6% men and 33.4% women. She qualifies the lower number of men as compared with Joeckel's 78% men, by noting that her study did not include the larger municipal libraries which might affect the percentage of women on the boards.

Most of the trustees were between 40 and 69 years of age, with a median age of 53. This is three years younger than the Joeckel study. There were 28.1% between 40-49, 29.2% between 50-59, and 22.1% between 60-69.

In both the Prentice and Joeckel study, the education level of the board members was noted to be high. In the 1970 study, 47.9% have a graduate degree, 13.5% have done graduate work, 22.9% have a college degree and 11.5% have some college. There is a higher level of education in the 1970 study which Prentice attributes to "the general rise in educational level over the past decades". (p.46) Prentice also notes that the high level of education is far above the average level of education for most American cities, and states "a service agency intended for all people is governed by an educational elite." (p46)

Prentice did not provide figures for occupational data. She did summarize it. As in the Joeckel findings, the professions were "heavily represented...by lawyers, teachers, and the clergy".(p.46) Both studies found lawyers to have the largest representation. The clergy and educators also ranked high in each study. Doctors, however, who had a 4.7% representation in Joeckel's research, were near the bottom in professional group representation in Prentice's research. Executives and businessmen had similar numbers in both studies. Both studies noted board members that were housewives and retired people. Prentice

states, "The skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled are almost totally unrepresented. Here again the largest segment of the community has been virtually ignored and the highly educated segments of the community have been placed in the position of directing the course of library service to the entire community." (p.46)

Prentice's data showed only 3% of the board members were not white, 2% were black and 1% were Oriental. She notes that the average black population of cities is 12.3%. A study by Frank L. Schick in 1948 recorded 2% representation for black trustees, the same as the 1970 study.

The most recent national survey of public library trustees was conducted by Mary Jo Lynch in 1997, and jointly funded by ALTA and ALA. A questionnaire was sent to 1,200 public library trustees with a return rate over 63%. The research examined general information about board operations, and demographics about the trustees. Demographic data studied included gender, age, education, occupation, income and race.

Gender data revealed, 65% of trustees to be female and 35% were male. This is major change from the 1935 and 1970 statistics where women were in the minority. Current figures thus show women to be in the majority for board representation.

Lynch states that trustees in her study are similar in age and education to those in the 1935 study. There is a large representation in the 45-54 category (27%), 55-64 category (28%) and the 65-74 category (25%), with the age ranges totaling to 73%.

In education, most board members have a high level of education. The majority have a graduate or professional degree (36%). More than 50% have either a 4-year college degree (29%) , 2-year college degree (7%) or some college (16%). Statistics for the United States show the majority of citizens have a high school diploma. Public library board members clearly differ demographically in level of education from the general citizen population.

In income, the majority of board members have an income $50,000 and above, with the largest category being over $75,000 (29%). Twenty-one percent report income between $35,000-$49,000. Prentice did not provide income data, and Joeckel information was limited with no numbers provided.

Lynch's study reported that 41% of trustees were not employed, and 14% were employed part time. Three hundred and eighteen trustees listed an occupation. 51% reported an professional occupation. Teachers "far outnumbered" lawyers in this current research.

Racial demographics reported by Lynch indicate that 96% of trustees are white. Joeckel did not provide information on race. Prentice in 1970 recorded that 97% of trustees were white.

Another area of research relative to public libraries and demographics is research that examines public library users in the United States. The 1990 Equifax-Harris survey "Consumers in the Information Age", a national survey about comprehensive research public library use in the United States, identified important trends in public library use. To begin, the extensive use of the public library can be seen through the statistics that "more than 6 Americans out of ten--or 122

million people--reported that they had used the public library in the past year" (Westin 1991, 3)

The Equifax-Harris survey provided important demographic data about the use of public libraries. "Minorities are among the heaviest users" of some library services. (p.4) Women use public libraries slightly more than men 68% vs. 63 %. Level of education was a significant factor in library use: 90% of patrons with postgraduate education use the library; 83% with college graduate education and 81% with some college. Income was highly correlated with library use. "The highest percentage of library users falls among those who make $50,000 and over (81%). Use then decreases with income: 72% of those earning $35,001 or more report public library use". Only 54% of patrons earning $7,500 or less use the public library. There is some difference in use between racial groups; the percentage of use by white patrons is 67 as compared with use by Hispanic patrons at 62% and Black patrons at 58%.

In looking at the demographics of public library boards and the demographic data on public library patrons some patterns seem to stand out. Both the library boards and large percentages of patrons are higher in education, and with higher incomes. Could it be that public libraries are serving these patron groups more effectively? Could it be that library program and services are more geared toward these populations?

This research gives an overview of patron use and demographics in the United States. This research project will look at one state, Ohio, its trustees' demographics as compared with their respective public library community, and comparisons with past trustee demographic studies.

Methodology

A self-administered questionnaire was used to gather data from the trustees of Ohio public libraries. The libraries selected included the ten largest public libraries in Ohio and a stratified sampling of trustees from public libraries in Ohio divided into three categories (five in each category). The demographic characteristics gathered and analyzed are gender, race, age, income, and education level.

Statistics from the 1997 Directory of Ohio Libraries ranking Ohio public libraries by FTE Staff were used. The four categories for this study are as follows: Category I is the top ten libraries with 100 FTE Staff or more; Category II is public libraries between 20 to 100 FTE Staff; Category III is libraries between 10 to 19.99 FTE Staff; and Category IV is libraries with less than 10 FTE Staff. Five public library boards were systematically selected chosen from each of the categories. Thus the total number of originally selected boards was 25. Each library board was assigned a separate coding number to identify it.

Library directors of each chosen library were sent a letter briefly describing the study and asking for their assistance in distributing the survey (See Appendix B). Also enclosed with the letter was a copy of the survey for their review. Follow-up calls were made asking if the letter had been received. The library directors were asked if they were willing to distribute the survey to trustees: (1) at the next board meeting, (2) with board materials mailed to the board before the next meeting or (3) send the researcher a list of board members names and addresses so surveys could be mailed directly to board members. Four of the original board directors requested that their boards not participate in the study.

The next library in each category from the directory was then contacted by letter and phone calls. In Category I only one more library was contacted because the remaining libraries had less than 100 FTE staff. One of the substitute libraries also decided not to participate in the study. A total of 23 libraries agreed to participate in the survey. Library directors were told that if a board member seriously objected to answering a question, that information for that item could be left blank.

U.S. Census data were collected about Ohio, and the respective communities of the boards. Demographic data from public libraries designated as county libraries used county demographic data, and demographic data from city libraries used city demographic data. Comparisons were made between each board and its patron community, as well with statistics from other public library board studies.

Survey Analysis

The high return rate of surveys for the Ohio study overall and Category I and II specifically, resulted in data that could be analyzed with demographic data within Ohio and other national research. One hundred and fifty nine surveys were sent out to library board members; 92 responses were returned. One was determined to be a duplicate and one lacked coding information and was unusable. The remaining 90 responsents resulted in a return rate of 57%.

In Category I, 37 of the 64 surveys were returned (58%) and in Category II, 22 of the 35 surveys were filled out with a 63% return rate. Low survey returns for Category III and IV prevented useful analysis of these boards and communities. These categories contained public libraries that were medium or small in size, specifically under 20 FTE in staff size. There was sufficient data to examine Category I, II and Ohio boards in general.

TABLE 1 Data Analysis of Gender

Gender	Survey Number	Survey Percentage	Ohio Percentage	Prentice Percentage	Lynch Percentage	U. S. Percentage
Male	42	48%	48%	67%	35%	49%
Female	45	52%	52%	33%	65%	51%
Unknown	3	-				

Data Analysis of Gender

Table 1 identifies slightly more female board members (52%) than male board members (48%) for the current survey. When comparing this to the demographic figures of the population for Ohio, this is an exact match. This demographic information is a significant change from the Prentice's 1970 data where a clear majority of men were board members (66.6%). Lynch's recent national study strongly indicates greater female

board representation nationally (67%). Over time, the demographic trend seems to be women are holding half or more of the overall public library board positions.

TABLE 2 Data Analysis of Race

Race	Number	Percentage	Ohio Percentage	Prentice Percentage	Lynch Percentage	U. S. Percentage
Caucasian	80	89%	88%	97%	97%	74%
Black	8	9%	11%	2%	2%	12%
Hispanic	-	-	1%*		2%	10%
Asian	1	1%	1%	1%	-	3%
Other	-	-	1%	-	-	1%
Totals	89	99%	102%	100%	101%	100%

* Hispanic percentages are considered an ethnic group and are not included the U.S. Census data for race; as a result the total is higher than 100.

Data Analysis of Race

The survey results demonstrate a close correlation between the percentage of board members in the survey who are Caucasian (89%) and the number of Caucasians in the Ohio population (88%). The relationship between the percentage of Black board members surveyed was 9% of the total board members, a similar percentage to the percentage of Black citizens of Ohio which is 11%. In particular, when contrasting the 1970 Prentice (97% Caucasian, 2% Black) and 1998 Lynch percentages (96% Caucasian, 2% Black) with the United States statistics (74% Caucasian, 12% Black) for racial distribution in the total population of the country, the initial figures in this preliminary Ohio survey shows relatively good racial representation of Black and Caucasian groups. Note that the demographic statistics for Ohio as compared with the U. S. statistics have some differences. The most

notable is the difference in the percentage for Hispanics in the U.S. population which is 10% whereas the percentage for Ohio is 1%.

TABLE 3 Data Analysis of Age

Age	Survey Number	Survey Percentage	Ohio Percentage	Lynch Percentage	U. S. Percentage
Under 25	-		36%	-	36%
25 - 34	2	2%	17%	1%	15%
35 - 44	10	11%	15%	15%	16%
45 - 54	24	27%	10%	27%	12%
55 - 64	23	26%	9%	22%	8%
65 - 74	27	30%	8%	25%	7%
75 and over	4	4%	5%	11%	6%

Data Analysis of Age

Sixty percent of the respondents were 55 and over. These results are similar to the Lynch national study results. The categories of age with the largest percentages were ages 45 - 54, 54 - 64, and 65 - 74. All of these categories were over 20% in both this Ohio survey and the U. S. study. People 25 - 34 and those under 25 had the lowest representation in public library boards both in this Ohio survey and in the national study. The category with the best correlation across all categories is age 35 - 44 with 11% in the Ohio survey compared with 15% in the Ohio population, and 15% in the Lynch study compared with 16% in the U.S. population. This Ohio survey also had a close correlation in the 75 and over age category with 4% in the survey and 5% in the Ohio population.

TABLE 4 Data Analysis of Income

Income	Survey Number	Survey Percentage	Ohio Percentage	Lynch Percentage	U. S. Percentage
Less than $15,000	-	-	25%	3%	23%
$15,000 -$24,999	5	6%	18%	8%	17%
$25,000 -$34,999	6	7%	17%	16%	14%
$35,000 -$49,999	12	14%	19%	21%	16%
$50,000 -$74,999	21	25%	14%	22%	17%
$75,000 -$99,999	13	16%	4%	29%	14%
$100,000 & over	26	31%	3%	**	**
Unknown	7	-			

** Percentage for $100,000 and over included in $75,000 - $99,999 figure.

Data Analysis of Income

Both the current Ohio survey and the Lynch study demonstrate boards with a wide range of income distribution. However, trustees that responded to the Ohio survey and those from the national study have a higher amount of income than the Ohio and U. S. populations. Patrons with less than $15,000 household income were unrepresented in the Ohio survey, and minimally represented at 3% in the national study vs. 28% in the U.S. population. Those in the $15,000 - $24,999 category were also significantly under-represented at 6% in the Ohio survey vs. 18 % in the Ohio population; and 3% in the U. S. study vs. 17% in the U.S. population. Striking differences are also noted in the upper income categories. The Ohio population has 7% with income $75,000 and above, whereas the public library boards surveyed in Ohio have 47% with incomes of $75,000 and above. The national study

revealed 29% of its board members had incomes of $75,000 and above contrasted with the U. S. population figure of 14%. Thus Ohio survey had more board members in the highest income categories. The categories with the closest representation were those in the middle: $35,000 - 49,999 and $50,000 - 74,999. Fourteen percent of surveyed Ohio boards earn between $35,000 - 49,999 with 19% of the Ohio population having the same income. Similarly 20% of national boards were in this category with 17% of the U.S. population having the same income. In the $50,000 - 74,999 category, 25% of surveyed Ohio boards have this income compared to 19% of the Ohio population. The national survey showed 22% of its boards were in this category compared to 17% of the U.S. population.

TABLE 5 Data Analysis of Education

Education	Survey Number	Survey Percentage	Ohio Percentage	Prentice Percentage	Lynch Percentage	U. S. Percentage
Less than High School	–	–	24%	*	1%	18%
High School Graduate	1	1%	36%	4%	12%	34%
Some College	6	7%	17%	12%	16%	18%
2 Year College Degree	-		5%	*	7%	7%
4 Year College Degree	22	24%	11%	37%	29%	15%
Graduate or Professional Degree	61	68%	6%	48%	36%	8%

* Data not gathered in this category by Prentice.

Data Analysis of Education

Demographically, public library board members reported a high level of education in the Ohio and U.S. studies. However, Ohio and U. S. populations report low levels of education with 24% in Ohio having less than High School and 36% graduating from High School. Similarly, the U.S. population has 18% with less than a High School education and 34% having graduated from High School. Sixty-eight percent of surveyed Ohio board members had Graduate or Professional Degrees, and in the U.S. study 36%. In contrast the Ohio and U.S. populations report low figures for this level of education (6% for Ohio, 8% for U.S.). The figures for boards are slightly lower in the 4-Year College Degree category. Twenty-four percent of those surveyed in Ohio were in this category, a very similar number to the national study with 29%. Again, the Ohio and U.S. population figures were significantly lower (Ohio 11%, U.S. 15%).

TABLE 6 Data Analysis of Category I, II and Ohio Libraries

Demographic Area	Category I Percentage	Category I Demo-graphics	Category II Percentage	Cat. II Demo-graphics	Ohio Study Percent.
GENDER					
Male	56%	48%	54%	48%	48%
Female	44%	52%	45%	52%	52%
RACE					
Caucasian	75%	75%	100%	99%	89%
Black	22%	23%	-	1%	9%
Hispanic	-	1%	-	1%	-
Asian	3%	1%	-	1%	1%
Other	-	1%	-	-	1%
AGE					
Under 25	-	36%	-	36%	-
25 - 34	-	17%	9%	17%	2%
35 - 44	8%	15%	14%	18%	11%
45 - 54	24%	10%	23%	10%	27%
55 - 64	32%	9%	28%	8%	26%
65 - 74	30%	8%	23%	7%	30%
75 and over	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%
INCOME					
Less than $15,000	-	27%	-	15%	-
$15,000 - $24,999	3%	18%	-	18%	6%
$25,000 - $34,999	3%	16%	5%	18%	7%
$35,000 - $49,999	17%	18%	5%	23%	14%
$50,000 - $74,999	8%	14%	52%	18%	25%
$75,000 - $99,999	17%	5%	14%	5%	16%
$100,000 & Over	53%	3%	24%	4%	31%
Unknown	-	-	-	-	-
EDUCATION					
Less than H.Schl	-	22%	-	17%	-
High School Grad	-	29%	-	36%	1%
Some College	3%	18%	-	19%	7%
2 Yr. Coll. Degree	-	5%	-	6%	-
4 Yr. Coll. Degree	16%	13%	45%	15%	24%
Grad/Prof Degree	81%	9%	54%	8%	68%

Data Analysis of Category I, II and Ohio Libraries

Table 6 displays the results of the survey for Category I, and II with data on the demographics of their communities. Category I is the eight libraries with 100 FTE Staff or more; Category II is public libraries which have 20 to 100 FTE Staff. The last column provides the percentage figures for the entire Ohio survey results. In the area of gender, survey results from Category I, II, and the Ohio survey are similar or the same. No significant differences are noted. Though Category I is slightly higher (56%) than Category II (54%), this is a small difference in consideration of the size of the samples.

Demographically the area of race shows significant differences between Category I and Category II. Category I shows 75% of trustees in those library boards are Caucasian and 22% are Black. The demographics for Category I show an exact match for percentage of Caucasians (75%) and a near match for Blacks (23%) with only one percent higher for the community populations. This is in high contrast to Category II where 100% of the boards members were Caucasians, however the demographics show that 99% of the community populations are Caucasian with 1% figures for Black, Asian and Hispanic racial/ethnic groups. Demographically in the area of race, both the board composition and the composition of the communities are similar. The major difference is between the two categories, with Category II having a board that is homogeneous racially. At the same time, the community shows very little diversity racially/ethnically.

Age distribution showed a wide variation in the survey results. However, no board members in the entire Ohio survey were under 25 years of age. In Category II, 9% of the trustees were between 25 - 35

years of age. This was a high percentage compared to Category I with no representation in this age range, and the Ohio survey where 2% board members were in this age range. The entire Ohio survey and Category I and II had the majority of trustees between 45 to 74 years of age. Category II had slightly more trustees in the 35 - 45 range with 14%, as compared with 8% in Category I and 11% in the full survey. Demographically, the communities show the largest figures for those 45 years old and younger. However, the largest numbers for the under 25 category are skewed. If the people who are 18 and under are subtracted from the population percentages then a more realistic comparison is drawn. With this correction applied, the following occurs: the population between 19 - 24 years of age in Category I is 10%, and Category II is 8%. Though there are no board members in this age category, the lack of representation is less significant relative to the percentages in the communities. Board representation in the 75 and over category is similar in all categories (4% or 5%). Both demographically and in the various size libraries, this age group has a small representation that is close to its demographic equivalent in their communities.

A wide range of distribution was evident in income range for public library trustees. In the area of income, there were substancial differences between Category I and II, as well as differences between the income of board members relative to their respective communities. Category I had the highest percentage for incomes $100,000 and over (53%) while the demographic for the populations reported 3% - lower than Category II and the entire survey. In striking contrast 27% of the population for Category I was in the lowest income bracket, less than $15,000. On the positive side, although neither Category I nor Category

II, had board members in the less than $15,000 range, Category I had trustees in the next two income ranges. Three percent of board members were in the $15,000 - $24,999 range and 3% were in the $25,000 - $34,999 range. In Category II, there were no trustees in the $15,000 - $24,999 range and 5% in the $25,000 - $34,999 range. Category II had the highest percentage of board members in the $50,000 - $74,999 range. The total percentage of trustrees in Category II with incomes under $75,000 is 62%, as compared with Category I where the total for these same categories is 31%. Overall, the majority of board members were in the middle to high income brackets, while the communities they represent have populations primarily in the low to middle income brackets. The largest discrepancies are in the lack of representation of low income patrons and the over-representation of high income patrons.

Representation on public library boards in the area of education showed a significant lack of diversity and striking differences from their communities. There were no board members in Category I who had less than a high school education, a high school education or some college. Only 3% of this category had a 2-year college degree. In Category II there were no board members in these same groups, and no trustees with some college. All board members in Category II had either a 4-year college degree, or a graduate or professional degree. The communities for Category I and II present a dramatically different picture. The majority of the population in Category I and II had less than high school or a high school level of education. Twenty-two percent of Category I had less than a high school education and 29% had a high school education. Seventeen percent of Category II had less than a high school degree, and 36% had a high school education. Nineteen percent in this category had

some college. In striking contrast, for Category I, 81% of board members have the highest level of education, a graduate or professional degree and 16% have a 4-year degree. In Category II, 54% had a graduate or professional degree and 45% have a 4 year degree. The figures for the entire survey show a similar pattern, with high representation in the two highest education levels and little or no representation in the two lowest levels.

Conclusions and Implications

The high return rate of surveys for the Ohio study overall and Category I and II specifically, resulted in data that could be analyzed with demographic data within Ohio and other national research.

Information gathered from this study included good representation on Ohio boards in the areas of gender and race. Overall, in the Ohio survey and in the largest libraries (with 100 FTE and over) racial representation of Blacks correlated well with the demographics for the state of Ohio, and Category I demographics. These statistics showed significantly better racial representation for a large minority group than national studies which have previously have examined board demographics. For example, in the Lynch study 2% of the board members were Black while U. S. statistics for that same demographic group is 12%. Lastly, in Ohio Asians which had a demographic percentage of 1%, had this same percentage of representation on boards.

In the area of gender, the data for this study had an exact correlation for percentage of men and women on public library boards relative to the percentage of men and women in the entire Ohio population. Lynch's recent national study revealed significant differences between board representation of men and women vs. national statistics. U. S. demographics show that there are 49% men and 51% women, they are close to equal in numbers. However, the public library boards have 35% men and 65% women. Compared to previous studies in the national study, women are not only represented, but they are represented in numbers greater than the general population, a reverse from earlier historical periods. In contrast, this Ohio study had gender

representation on boards that closely correlated with Ohio demographic statistics.

Demographic board information about age revealed trends similar to Lynch's national study. Boards have the greatest number of board members between the ages of 45 and 74. This is in contrast to Ohio, and the national population which have large percentages 44 years old and younger.

While the Ohio survey and the U.S. study reveal boards with a wide range of income distribution, public library boards in Ohio substantially over-represent the two highest income groups and under-represent the three lowest income groups. In the Ohio study, there were no trustees in the lowest income category (less than $15,000). The national study had a low figure (3%) but some representation in this group.

In the national study, all groups are represented in levels of education. The Ohio study had two education categories with no representation: less than High School and 2-year college degree. The most striking discrepancy was 68% of the Ohio board members have graduate or professional degrees while only 6% of the Ohio population have this same level of education. In the national study while there was a large difference in this area it was not as large, 36% in the study vs. 8% in the U. S. population.

In comparing Category I and II data with the entire study, several important finds emerged. In the area of race, Category I contained all the board members that are Black. Twenty-two percent of the board members were Black and this correlated closely with the demographic percentage for this area which was 23%. In contrast, in Category II

100% of the board members were Caucasian. This is striking, however, what is important to notice is that 99% of the population is Caucasian with 1% being Black, 1% Asian and 1% Hispanic. With little diversity in the communities there was homogeneity in the boards themselves.

The other major difference in Category II was the lack of diversity on the board in other demographic factors. The population itself included a wide distribution of people in all income and education groups, yet the board had no to little representation in low income categories and four areas of lower education were totally unrepresented on the public library boards (See Table 6). While there was low representation in these areas in the entire Ohio survey and in Category I, the differences were undeniably striking in Category II. For example in Category I, 3% were in the $15,000 - 24,999 area compared with zero in Category II; and in the $35,000 - 49,999 area Category I had 17% while Category II had 5%. It is important to note in both these categories the demographic statistics for the population were 18% or higher.

Implications The Equifax-Harris survey about public library patrons identified women, high income and high education as demographic factors which have a high correlation with public library use. Could it be that public libraries unknowingly have been directed to more successfully work with people with these demographic characteristics? Since boards often have members with these demographic characteristics, could the needs and wants of people with other demographic characteristics be receiving less attention in public libraries? Do boards in Ohio need to more carefully be aware of their demographic characteristics in order to reach out to certain people and groups not adequately being represented?

Historically, public library boards have lacked diversity, over-representing older, white, high income, highly educated males (Harris, 1973). The process of appointing trustees to boards may contribute to a lack of demographic diversity. In Ohio, library trustees are appointed to boards by a variety of governing bodies. Two-hundred and fifty public libraries are organized under Ohio law. The majority of public libraries in the state are governed by school district (152) and county district (53) laws (Ohio State Library, 1991). School district libraries are appointed by the local boards of education. County district library trustees are appointed by the judge or judges of the court of common pleas and by the board of county commissioners.

The process of appointing could be a factor in the demographic groups that are more likely to be have more education, higher income, etc.. Specifically, the people appointing members to the library boards are more likely to be professionals with higher incomes and education levels and thus may be more likely to know people from similar demographic groups. In addition, the library laws regarding these appointments define no specific suggestions or requirements with regard to demographics or diversity. (Note: As stated earlier, the goal is not exact demographic matches but diversity and efforts to be representative of the library community.) Would policies encouraging the representation of more demographically diverse public library boards be advantageous to the general public and patrons of public libraries?

This Ohio study of the demographic characteristics of public library board members is a preliminary study that raises important questions. It has identified some patterns similar to national public boards, currently and in the past. At the same time it has identified

some areas where Ohio, is different than boards that have been studied. There are areas where boards have made progress. Previously, women were highly underrepresented and currently women have equal or high representation on many boards. Racially, Ohio's percentages for diversity are good. But there are areas where there is a lack of diversity, namely age, income and education. While some boards do better than others, all boards need to realize the importance of reaching out and attempting to build boards that are a good match to their communities.

The data points out the need for further research on diversity in public library boards in Ohio. A true random sample study of Ohio public library trustees would provide valuable data. This study and other research like it, helps make libraries aware of the rich diversity in our communities and how library boards and public libraries can serve a wide spectrum of patrons.

APPENDIX A

Ohio Public Library Trustee Questionnaire

1. How many board members are currently on your public library board? _____

2. Please circle are you: Male Female

3. Are you:
- ❑ Caucasion
- ❑ Black
- ❑ Hispanic
- ❑ Asian
- ❑ Other:_____

4. Do you have children? (Please mark ALL categories that apply)

- ❑ I have no children
- ❑ I have at least one child under 5 years old
- ❑ I have at least one child between ages 5 - 12
- ❑ I have at least one child between 13 - 18
- ❑ I have at least one child over 18 years of age.

5. Please indicate your correct age range?

- ❑ I am under 25 years old
- ❑ I am between 25 - 34 years old
- ❑ I am between 35 - 44 years old
- ❑ I am between 45 - 54 years old
- ❑ I am between 55 - 64 years old
- ❑ I am between 65 - 74 years old
- ❑ I am 75 years old or older.

6. Please indicate your correct household income range:

- ❑ I earn less than 15,000 per year
- ❑ I earn between $15,000 - 24,999 per year
- ❑ I earn between $25,000 - 34,999 per year
- ❑ I earn between $ 35,000 - 49,999 per year
- ❑ I earn between $50,000 - $74,999 per year
- ❑ I earn between $75,000 - $99,999 per year
- ❑ I earn over $100,000 per year.

Ohio Public Library Trustee Questionnaire

7. Educational Background:(Please check the highest level attained)

- ❑ Less than high school
- ❑ High school graduate
- ❑ Some college
- ❑ 2-year college degree
- ❑ 4-year college degree
- ❑ Graduate or Professional degree.

8. Are you currently:

- ❑ Employed full time
- ❑ Employed part time
- ❑ Not employed.

If employed, answer Question 9.

9. What is your occupation: _____.

10. Do you belong to any organizations? If yes, please name them.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Project Title: A Demographic Study of Ohio Public Library Trustees

September 24, 1998

Dear Library Trustee,

I am a graduate student at Kent State University working towards my master's degree at the School of Library and Information Science. I am writing to ask for your help with a research project. This project will explore basic demographic characteristics of library board members in Ohio.

Would you please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to me in the self-addressed stamped envelope. Responses to the questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential. Participation in the project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or cease participation at any time without penalty. If you want to know more about this research project, you may contact me at (216) 595-9505, or you may contact my research paper advisor, Dr. Richard Rubin, at (330) 672-2782. This project has been approved by Kent State University. If you have any questions about Kent State University's rules for research studies, please call Tom Jones at (330) 672-2851.

The time you take to complete this questionnaire will provide information about public library boards in Ohio. If you would like a summary of the results, just let me know. Thank you very much for your time and effort.

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN TO ME BY OCTOBER 28, 1998.

Sincerely,

Audrey Warner, M.S.W.
Graduate Student
School of Library and Information Science

APPENDIX B

Audrey Warner, M.S.W.
25510 Bryden Road
Beachwood, OH 44122
(216) 595-9505

September 9, 1998

Director
Public Library
Street
City, State Zip

Dear Mr./Mrs._____,

I am a graduate student at Kent State University working towards my Master of Library Science degree. I am writing to ask for your help with my research project. This research project will explore basic demographic characteristics of library board members in Ohio. As the Library Director, I would appreciate if you would distribute the very brief questionnaire to your board of trustees, and ask them to complete it. (It will only take just a minute to do.)

I am enclosing a copy of the questionnaire, and the consent letter for you to review. I will be including self-addressed stamped envelopes so that the questionnaires can be returned easily. This project is important because I hope to learn about Ohio trustee characteristics versus national statistics for trustees. I will be calling you in a few days to request your cooperation.

I look forward to speaking with you, and greatly appreciate any and all your efforts in this research project. If you would like a summary of the results please let me know.

Sincerely,

Audrey Warner, M.S.W.
Graduate Student
School of Library and Information Science

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